

April 8, 1974

to evaluate these people that the sheriffs have particularly in my area.

PRESIDENT: Senator Dickinson, this is just to reassure you that we know you're back there some place. Senator Dickinson.

SENATOR DICKINSON: Mr. President, would Senator Fellman yield to a question or two?

PRESIDENT: Senator Fellman yield?

SENATOR FELLMAN: Yes.

SENATOR DICKINSON: Senator Fellman, do you know what the average length of time of these prisoners in the county jail are held? Are there long term prisoners held?

SENATOR FELLMAN: Not longer than six months.

SENATOR DICKINSON: What's the average, do you know?

SENATOR FELLMAN: I don't know the average but it's a misdemeanor. It's limited to people being held for misdemeanors so it could be not longer than six months.

SENATOR DICKINSON: Well, Senator Snyder touched on this a little bit but the point being, are they there long enough to have any effectual program?

SENATOR FELLMAN: Yes, the...there was a speaker whose name I can't recall but was in Omaha a few days ago. Speaking at a symposium on corrections and was asked this very question. And the answer was that a great deal can be done possibly more on a short term prisoner than a long term prisoner at the penitentiary because the crime that the person committed is a lesser crime and the person generally has less of a record. So you're dealing with someone who is more apt to be a first time offender and not too far into this criminal cycle. It's very important and it's a key time to turn this person into a work release program or an educational program and to maintain ties with their family so that you can get them out of the graduate school of crime that jails and prisons are and back into normal society where they're productive.

SENATOR DICKINSON: I guess I should have specified my question but yes or no also. Just a minute, Senator Fellman. What's the problem in Douglas County in your opinion? Is what you're after in this bill not now possible without changing...without legislation?

SENATOR FELLMAN: Right now, Douglas County's jail is being operated by a very fine former policeman.

SENATOR DICKINSON: Could he not do what you are wanting done here if he so desired?

SENATOR FELLMAN: Well, if he so desires but....

SENATOR DICKINSON: Is this a philosophical debate between... if....